

**CITY OF LODI  
INFORMAL INFORMATIONAL MEETING  
"SHIRTSLEEVE" SESSION  
CARNEGIE FORUM, 305 WEST PINE STREET  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2005**

An Informal Informational Meeting ("Shirtsleeve" Session) of the Lodi City Council was held Tuesday, August 23, 2005, commencing at 7:00 a.m.

**A. ROLL CALL**

Present: Council Members – Hansen, Johnson, Mounce, and Mayor Beckman  
Absent: Council Members – Hitchcock  
Also Present: City Manager King, City Attorney Schwabauer, and Deputy City Clerk Perrin

**B. TOPIC(S)**

**B-1 "Short Range Transit Plan and Proposed Service Reductions and Enhancements"**

Public Works Director Prima stated that transit typically runs at a loss and is heavily subsidized; however, there are ways to optimize service to both serve the public and be fiscally responsible.

Tiffani Fink, Transportation Manager, introduced the Draft Short Range Transit Plan, which is a Federal Transportation Administration requirement, and explained that it is a planning tool used to manage transit, evaluate performance, and to look at long-term needs and growth. It also provides an in-depth look at ridership by route and time of day and assesses needs, including the locations of bus stops and shelters and the capital fleet maintenance requirements. The Plan serves as a comparison with other agencies of similar and varied size by using traditional measures such as service, ridership, cost per hour and per mile, and fare box recovery. Ms. Fink reviewed the recommended reductions and enhancements:

**Reduction #1 – Evening Service Hours on Grapeline**

The recommendation is to cut service on fixed-route starting at 7:00 p.m. and offer a general public reduced rate on Dial-A-Ride (DAR) to those people who are affected. Currently, the last loop runs until 7:39 p.m., and the ridership on many of these evening routes is extremely low. On average, the system serves 20 passengers per hour with five routes total (or four people per route).

Council Member Johnson suggested eliminating the last bus and combining the 6:15 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. times to avoid having to offer the DAR benefit, to which Ms. Fink responded that staff would look into the suggestion. Despite the low ridership during this timeframe, there are people who utilize the service to get home from work, which was the reasoning behind the reduced DAR rate. Public Works Director Prima added that the City pays for the service based on the number of hours; therefore, a slight reduction may not realize a cost savings.

Ms. Fink confirmed that MV Transportation estimates DAR has the capacity for that time period and could pick up passengers without incurring delays or long wait times.

Mayor Beckman questioned the criteria for the reduction in the general public rate on DAR, to which Ms. Fink responded that the rate would be reduced from \$5 to \$3. Another option is to leave the rate as is, but offer a lower rate to those with a monthly pass for fixed route. In that case, riders would purchase a supplemental ticket and use it together with the monthly pass. Mayor Beckman expressed his opposition to the general public reduced rate for DAR and was supportive of the monthly pass option.

Reduction #2 – Weekend Service Hours on Grapeline

Saturday and Sunday ridership is extremely low late in the day, and staff is proposing to cut the service to one time (i.e. 3:09 p.m.) for both days. Currently, the run times are staggered, and this change would be a reduction of 2 hours and 10 minutes on Saturdays and 45 minutes on Sundays. DAR would be available for those who need transportation.

In response to Council Member Mounce, Ms. Fink stated that on the weekends DAR would be able to cover any potential increase. There may be occasions, however, such as during the Lodi Grape Festival, where service would be extended to the existing level to meet the higher passenger demands.

Reduction #3 – Combine Route 1 and Route 5 into one Route A on Weekends

Route 1, which goes by Lodi Lake, Raleys on Lower Sacramento Road, and the shopping centers on both sides of Kettleman Lane, and Route 5, which serves primarily the east side, Kettleman Lane, and Cherokee Lane, have the lowest ridership levels on the weekends. Staff is proposing to eliminate one of the routes and make a circuitous route, which would connect residents on the east side to facilities and services on the west side without the need for a transfer. There is a potential for lost ridership; however, this will offer a more attractive route with access to the lake and shopping on the weekends.

In reply to Council Member Johnson regarding the low ridership on Route 5, Ms. Fink stated that on Sundays people typically go to church or out of town, visit families, find rides from other people, walk, or stay in their area of the community. During the weekdays, there is a large student population that uses the express routes to get to school, which picks up on the east side of town and then connects with other routes.

Reduction #4 – Fixed Route and Dial-A-Ride: Holiday Reductions

Currently, the City offers DAR and fixed route all day on Easter Sunday, Christmas Eve, and Thanksgiving evening. Historically, ridership has been extremely low, and staff has annually cut back the service on a case-by-case basis. Staff is proposing to offer only DAR services on Easter Sunday morning. On Christmas Eve, staff is proposing to cut service early (fixed route at 12:09 p.m. and DAR at 2:00 p.m.), and on Thanksgiving evening, fixed route would run until 7:00 p.m. and DAR would end early.

Council Member Hansen stated that it appears all of these reductions are warranted; however, he felt it was important that the transit system provide transportation for people who have no other means of transport. Mr. Hansen expressed mixed feelings about the buses being used by high school students and the impact it has on our system. The City should not subsidize the school district for its lack of a bus system within the City limit boundaries, and he questioned the cost of providing this service.

Ms. Fink stated that the express routes run at extremely full levels and the fare recovery is high. This service is subsidized by the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG). For every hour it operates, the City receives 75% of its costs back from SJCOG, which together with the fare is very close to the full cost. The City has also applied for Congestion Mitigation Air Quality grant funding to replace existing gas vehicles and has requested Measure K funds to provide a match as this service is funded by SJCOG.

Council Member Hansen questioned if the fixed route system was the most expensive to operate, to which Ms. Fink replied that fixed route is a much more efficient system for the cost than DAR because the bus runs whether there is one person or 40.

In response to Mr. Hansen, Ms. Fink stated that the fares cover approximately 20% of the fixed route cost; the 80% subsidy is made up with Measure K, federal, and state funding. On DAR, the subsidy is approximately 90% with the same funding sources. Ms. Fink confirmed that the approximate cost savings for these reductions would be \$131,000, and Mr. Hansen questioned if the rise in fuel costs would tap into the savings.

Ms. Fink stated that compressed natural gas typically does not fluctuate as high as fuel, as the City purchases it directly from PG&E. Staff anticipates that it will stay within the budget; however, staff will return to Council with the specifics.

Enhancement #1 – Holiday Light Tours

The holiday light tours were extremely successful last year and served 521 passengers over the six nights. Staff is recommending to expand this program during the holiday season and to charge \$2 per person, or \$8 for a group of five. Residents who decorate their houses would be part of the route and included in the Lodi News-Sentinel layout, and passengers could vote for the best decorated house. This program has opened up a new ridership base of those who had never been on the bus. The \$2 per person charge should completely cover the costs and potentially make revenue.

Enhancement #2 – Winery Route

The City has been approached about creating a fixed route that would leave from downtown and go from winery to winery. Staff has been communicating with the Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission and the Lodi Conference and Visitors' Bureau on this proposal, which is in the early stages of development. If Council is interested in this program, the next step is to see which wineries are interested in participating, after which a potential route would be created. Staff would also inquire if the wineries would help offset the costs, and a price would then be set that would pay for the program. The Winter Wine Wander would serve as a good test weekend. Additionally, "Destination Lodi" is a good source to bring people to Lodi on the train.

Council Member Hansen expressed support for the Christmas light tour as it would bring in revenue and he hoped that the winery route would be approached in the same manner, or at the very least, it would break even.

Council Member Johnson echoed Mr. Hansen's support of and comments on both proposals and stated that he does not want the entire cost burden placed upon the City. He hoped the wineries that are benefiting from this would help defray some of the costs.

Public Works Director Prima added that it is difficult to put together a business plan of the costs and routes without the commitment from the wineries; however, staff did not want to proceed without Council support. Any new start up will have a time where it may not do well; it will take time to build up the ridership. If Council is interested in this proposal, staff will come back with a more detailed plan.

City Manager King stated that Van Ruiten, Jessie's Grove, Michael-David, and Borra wineries are looking at a business plan for downtown tasting rooms with buses transporting visitors to their wineries to see their operations. These two ideas are developing independently and could cross over.

Council Member Hansen pointed out that Destination Lodi has amazing potential in marketing Lodi and suggested combining train routes with bus routes to downtown Lodi and local wineries. Ms. Fink reported that she attended Destination Lodi meetings and there has been interest expressed in coordinating different events in town with transit.

City Manager King informed Council that the Short Range Transit Plan will come back to Council at the September 7 regular meeting for a public hearing.

Council Member Hansen requested an update on Greyhound, to which Ms. Fink replied that the contract language was reviewed by the City Attorney and sent to Greyhound for revisions. Staff anticipates that the contract will be returned this week. Currently, Greyhound runs through the transit station; however, it does not sell tickets out of that location. Mr. Hansen reported that he received citizen complaints that staff behind the DAR counter has not been helpful and he asked that this be looked into.

*Continued August 23, 2005*

**C. COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

**D. ADJOURNMENT**

No action was taken by the City Council. The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 a.m.

ATTEST:

Jennifer M. Perrin  
Deputy City Clerk

filed 8/23/05

***Recommended Reduction #1***

***Fixed Route: Evening Service Hours on Grapeline***

**Proposal:**

Eliminate Grapeline's last run beginning at 7:00 pm and ending at 7:39 pm. A reduced general public rate on Dial-A-Ride would be offered after 7 pm.

**Total Reduction and Potential Cost Savings:**

Anticipated reduction in service hours is approximately 975 hours annually. Anticipated cost savings (based on fully allocated rate minus depreciation): \$48,750

***Recommended Reduction #2***

***Fixed Route: Weekend Service Hours on Grapeline***

**Proposal:**

Eliminate the last three runs on Saturday and the last run on Sunday. This would make the 2:30 pm run the final run with service on Fixed Route ending at 3:09 pm both days. A reduced general public rate on Dial-A-Ride would be offered after 3pm.

**Total Reduction and Potential Cost Savings:**

Anticipated reduction in service hours is approximately 780 hours annually. Anticipated cost savings (based on fully allocated rate minus depreciation): \$39,000

***Recommended Reduction #3***

***Fixed Route: Combine Route 1 and Route 5 into one Route A on Weekends***

**Proposal:**

Combine Route 1 and Route 5 into Route A on Saturdays and Sundays to capture transfers between the two lines and to reduce the number of fixed routes operating due to the limited number of weekend riders on the two routes. In addition, it is recommended to rename the remaining routes to alphabetical routes on the weekend so that Route 2 would become B, Route 3 would become C and Route 4 would become D.

**Total Reduction and Potential Cost Savings:**

Anticipated reduction in service hours is approximately 923 hours annually. Anticipated cost savings (based on fully allocated rate minus depreciation): \$44,250

***Recommended Reduction #4***

***Fixed Route and Dial-A-Ride: Holiday Reductions***

**Proposal:**

Offer reduced Dial-A-Ride service only on Easter and shortened Fixed Route and Dial-A-Ride service on specific other dates due to lowered ridership demand.

**Total Reduction and Potential Cost Savings:**

Anticipated reduction in service hours is approximately 100 hours annually. Anticipated cost savings (based on fully allocated rate minus depreciation): \$5,000

***Recommended Enhancement #1***  
***Fixed Route: Holiday Light Tours***

**Proposal:**

Re-institute the Holiday Light Tours for the two weeks before Christmas, including the weekend before (no weekend service was provided previously).

**Total Reduction and Potential Cost Savings:**

By operating full vehicles at \$2.00 per person we should be able to cover our cost completely and hopefully incur additional income. In addition, this helps with meeting our passengers per hour goal. This light tour would add about 100 hours of service.

***Recommended Enhancement #2***  
***Fixed Route: Winery Route***

**Proposal:**

Add Weekend Fixed Route G with service to the local wineries in the greater Lodi area. This service would operate with 2 vehicles on 60 minute headways and initially would operate two (2) weekends a month.

**Total Reduction and Potential Cost Savings:**

Staff anticipates this service will require 528 hours of service per year. The cost of operation will be determined once the full system is developed. Staff will work with the local wineries to encourage sponsorship of the routes as well.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Potential Number of Passengers Affected per Year</b>	<b>Number of Service Hours Reduced</b>	<b>Potential Cost Savings</b>
Reduction #1	5,200	975 hours	\$48,750
Reduction #2	2,340	780 hours	\$39,000
Reduction #3	5,800	923 hours	\$44,250
Reduction #4	100	100 hours	\$5,000
Reduction #1 and #2	7,540	1,755 hours	\$87,750
Reduction #1 and #3	11,000	1,898 hours	\$93,000
Reduction #1 and #4	5,300	1,075 hours	\$53,750
Reduction #2 and #3	8,140	1,547 hours	\$77,350
Reduction #2 and #4	2,440	880 hours	\$44,000
Reduction #3 and #4	5,900	1,023 hours	\$49,250
Reduction #1, #2 and #3	13,340	2,522 hours	\$126,100
Reduction #1, #2 and #4	7,640	1,855 hours	\$92,750
Reduction #1, #3 and #4	11,100	1,998 hours	\$98,000
Reduction #2, #3 and #4	6,240	1,647 hours	\$82,350
Reduction #1, #2, #3 and #4	13,340	2,622 hours	\$131,100